

so imperfect a sense of religion as to bury the dead in the temples of the gods, and the priests so avaricious as to claim money for the permission of this impiety. He told us furthermore, that he had seen a magnificent temple, built on somewhat of a Grecian model, in the interior of which there are many flat marble, fastened with iron cramps against the walls, and serving for monuments. Continuing his discourse, he assured us that these monuments, although none are ancient, are of all forms and dimensions, as if the Thracians were resolved to waste and abolish the symmetry they had adopted; that they are inscribed in an obsolete language, so that the people whom they might animate and instruct, by recording brave and virtuous actions, pass them carelessly by, breaking off now and then a nose from a conqueror, and a wing from an agathodemon."

Our present business, however, is with health not beauty, and we leave the quaint writings of Lador for a letter by an Inspector of the City Police, setting forth an amount of illness and death in the neighbourhood of Barbican, in the city, supposed to be caused by exhalations from a burial-ground in Golden-lane, frightful to contemplate if correct. The truth of the communication has since been denied by the Guildhall Court of Sewers, the noxious gases spoken of being ascribed to the gully-hole of the sewer and the water from a steam-engine. The contradiction, however, is not by any means conclusive, and it is to be hoped that the matter will be further investigated.

This statement was forcibly dwelt on by Mr. Bond Cabell on Monday evening last, when he took the chair at a public meeting at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, Strand, called expressly to pass resolutions in favour of a sound and comprehensive Sanatory Bill, and so to strengthen the hands of the ministers.

At this meeting, on the motion of Mr. Mackinnon, M.P., it was resolved,—"That the drainage and sewage of the metropolis are very insufficient; the cleansing of the streets exceedingly imperfect; the supply of water lamentably deficient in quantity and bad in quality; that the practice of burying the dead in the midst of the living produces great demoralization, and grossly violates the sanctity of the grave; that these, among other evils, entail enormous and unnecessary expenses upon the people, and lead to a great deterioration of health and fearful destruction of life."

And further, on the motion of Mr. Lushington, M.P., "that this meeting deplores the apathy generally evinced by the public relative to the evils referred to in the preceding resolution, as well as the absence of an uniform law which would enable the Government to exercise an efficient control over local administrative bodies; and that this meeting pledges itself to support the Government, in any efforts made by it to pass a sound and comprehensive sanatory measure."

The Sanatory Commissioners are pursuing their examinations, and, if we understand rightly, have lately received some important evidence touching the size, form, and construction of sewers,—of this, however, all in good time.

In aid of the movement, happily commenced, the "Metropolitan Health of Towns Association" have issued the first number of a monthly "Journal of Public Health." The idea is a good one, but it will need to be carried out more efficiently than the first number promises, if it is to have much effect. Moreover, the price charged for it is too great. Under the head of "Correspondence" in this journal there is a slashing exposure of the Tower Hamlets' Commission of Sewers, which would

doubtless attract attention if the Commission were not now virtually defunct. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum!*

#### ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS.

At a meeting of the Institute, held on Monday, the 15th, Mr. C. Fowler, vice-president, in the chair, Mons. Firmin Epellet, and Major-General Howard Vyse, M.P., were elected honorary and corresponding members. Mons. Epellet, who is the architect of the department of the *Pas de Calais*, has recently completed the town-hall of St. Omer, which has the peculiarity of including a theatre within its walls.

In connection with Mr. Knowles' plan of the Parthenon, presented amongst other donations, Mr. Donaldson remarked, that it shewed that a joint in the pavement came under the centre of each column in the *naos*, quite contrary to modern practice. The speaker had always thought there must have been some communication between the *naos* and the *opisthodomus*, to enable the priests to get at the treasures kept there without going outside the building.

Mr. Penrose said appearances were not in favour of such a belief: there were no indications of a doorway.

Mr. C. H. Smith then gave some account of a species of trappean or porphyritic stone used in Devonshire for building purposes, and presented specimens to be added to the collection. Crediton Church, and other structures in that neighbourhood are built of it. It is of igneous formation (ranking with lava, clinkers, &c.), full of bubbles, afterwards filled with carbonate of lime: melted felspar formed the main part of the stone. Mr. Smith said it differed much in durability, and was found to be less depended on as it approached a grey colour.

Being asked whether setting it in the line of its bed made any difference in its durability, the reader said the line of bed could not be detected. Further, he thought in respect of lime stones, such as the oolites, Bath stone, Caen stone, &c., nothing was gained by setting them in the way of their beds: the sandstones were different. In Caen stone it was impossible for any person to say positively, merely from examination of a block, which was the direction of its bed. As to the value of this stone, the best of it was very durable, but a great difference was to be found in different specimens of it. As a general rule, the finer the grain of the oolites the more likely they were to decay: the coarse lasts longer. The best-looking work was the least likely to endure. The darker coloured Caen stone was the best.

Mr. Godwin said, the question was one of so much importance, that he would venture to refer the meeting to some experiments on Caen stone, made recently at Mr. Cubitt's, which shewed, without reference to the action of the weather in either case, that of two pieces of Caen stone the size of a brick, one, whereof the bed was parallel with the pressing surfaces, required fifty tons to crush it; while the other, wherein the bed was at right angles with the pressing surfaces, was crushed by thirty tons.

Mr. Poynter said it was worth notice, that the mullions of the windows in Henry Seventh's chapel at Westminster, which throughout were placed contrary to the line of the bed, were in the best state of preservation.

The chairman said, this was quite compatible with Mr. Godwin's statement. The mullions of windows had little or no weight to carry,—to ensure their preservation, the main consideration was to prevent their absorbing moisture, and this was better effected by placing the bed-line of the stone vertically rather than horizontally.

It was remarked that Caen stone contains nodules of clay, and is very deceptive,—the saw often discovering vents and faults in the soundest-looking blocks. The nodules in question, even though apparently sound, are soon affected by the frost, and the block splinters.

Mr. Donaldson gave a full account of the church of S. Maria del Fiore at Florence, and a description of the design for completing the facade, submitted to the Institute by the Cavaliere Niccolò Matta. To this paper we shall

probably refer again. It included an account of the wonderful dome, second in size only to that of St. Peter's, which it long preceded, erected by the scientific Brunelleschi.

In the course of the conversation which ensued, Mr. L'Anson remarked on the great interest of this building, as standing between the mediæval and revived classic buildings. In point of construction it was more perfect than St. Peter's, and a noble testimony to the skill of Brunelleschi. As regarded Cav. Matta's design, as far as he could judge, it seemed a happy adaptation.

The chairman said the design appeared creditable to the architect, and as Cav. Matta sought the opinion of the Institute, the meeting would probably record it by a vote, which might have reference only to its general effect.

Several members objected to commit the Institute to an opinion without due consideration, and, indeed, to the expediency of giving such opinions on proposed works, even with all materials for judging before them: ultimately, however, a committee was appointed to examine the design, and report upon it to the members.

We fully agree with those who objected to this course, and hope that the committee will report that they do not consider it desirable to express any opinion upon the design. A contrary course will lead to much inconvenience, and may be productive of harm. Once established a precedent, and a refusal to give an opinion will amount to a condemnation, while an assent in all cases will involve a great deal of useless trouble and responsibility. Moreover, it may happen that several architects have submitted designs for an intended work,—the present may be a case in point, for aught we know,—and one who should forward his project to the Institute and obtain their approval, might be inferior to another, though the author of a good design, yet armed with the Bull from Grosvenor-street, be enabled to carry off the prize, and an injustice would be done. The committee, appointed to consider what opinion, if any, shall be forwarded to Florence in support of this design, cannot do better than adopt the words of a phrenological friend of ours, who, when asked by young ladies in dainty drawing-rooms to "feel their heads," and report their characters, usually replies,—"As I must either flatter your vanity or wound your feelings, without any probability of doing good in either case, and may, moreover, commit myself, young women's heads being very deceptive, I do not think it desirable to accede to your request."

#### THE GAS MOVEMENT.

MONOPOLY PLEADS ITS OWN CASE QUIETLY BEFORE THE COMMONS.

A SPECIAL pleading, without much more scruple, yet without much less ingenuity, than that so often and so brilliantly displayed by the trimming barrister in defending the cause of his ill-but-dnomed and more than 'uneasy feeling' client at the bar of Justice, might have been shrewdly anticipated from the effective and convenient permission granted to gas companies by the Parliamentary 'order, to 'tell their own story,' in the form of statements of profit and loss, and other detail, which parties asked 'what they have to say in their own defence,' are well assured 'may be used against them' on their trial,—even at the Bar of the Commons' both in Parliament and out of Parliament assembled. But if the immense array of figures constituting the 'abstract of returns' called for by that terror of evil-doers, Mr. Hume, was really meant by the gas-house authorities as a special pleading in their own behalf,—instead of throwing dust into the eyes of the public, far less of Mr. Hume, it runs an imminent risk of being used much more against than in favour of their own past and present course of management,—or rather of mismanagement, both of their own best interests and the interests of that public for whose behoof they act, or ought to act, as faithful trustees of certain legacies, gifts, or boonities of nature and of science long since bequeathed to them for the common good. For a more, unequivocal condemnation of that course than their own returns present, no twelve honest men in a jury-box could have the heart to pronounce without that sop to a sensitive mind, even imaginary 'mitigating circumstances.' From beginning to